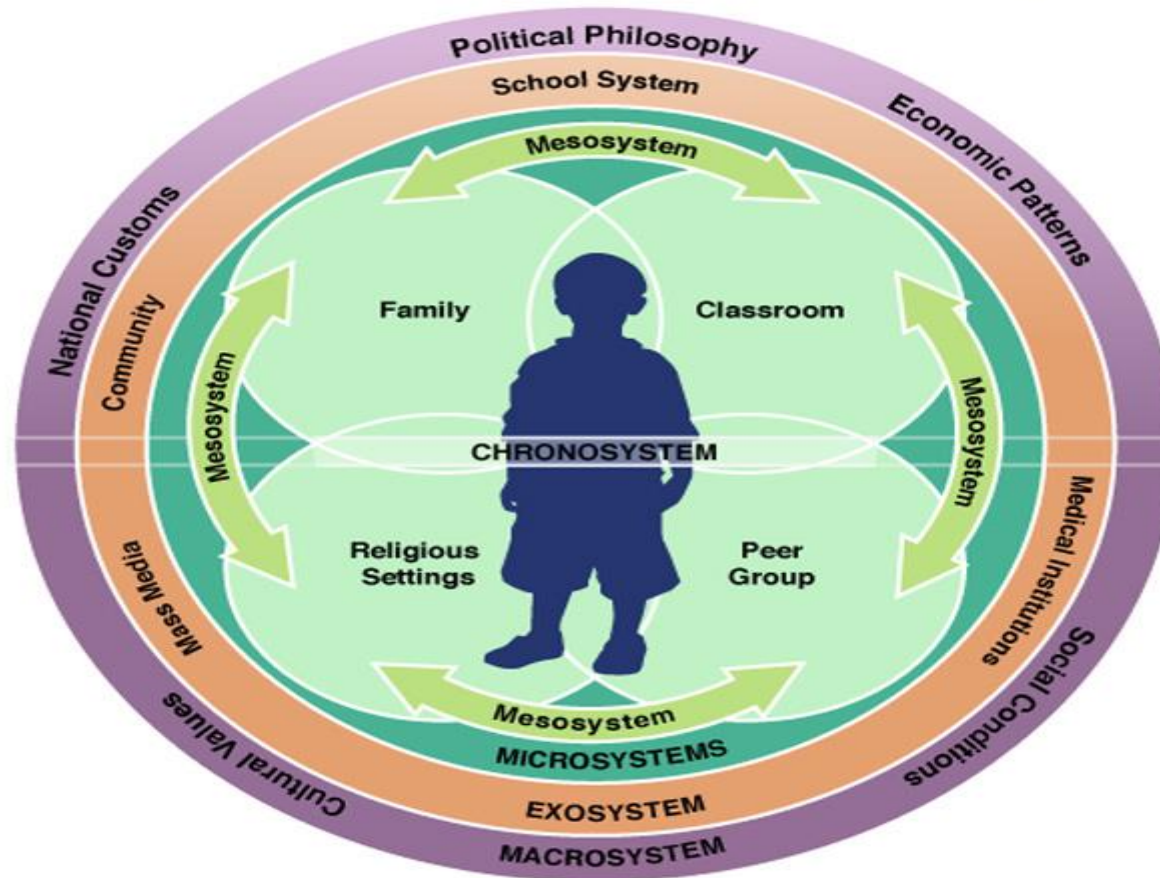


Image

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development



http://online.uncg.edu/courses/ses460/images/unit1/bronfenbrenner_large.jpg

Historical background and development



(Urie Bronfenbrenner 1917-2005)

Urie Bronfenbrenner was an American Russian psychologist who founded the theory on human development known as the Ecological Systems Theory in which he explained how factors in a person's environment affect his growth and development. The ecological systems theory says that we encounter different environments throughout our lifespan that may influence our behaviour in varying degrees. These systems include the micro system, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macro system, and the chronosystem. Because the person's own biology is considered part of the microsystem this theory has recently sometimes been called Bio-Ecological Systems Theory.

According to <https://explorable.com/ecological-systems-theory>, the five environmental systems are presented as follows:

1. The Micro System

The micro system's setting is the direct environment we have in our lives. Your family, friends, classmates, teachers, neighbours and other people who have a direct contact with you are included in your micro system. The micro system is the setting in which we have direct social interactions with these social agents. The theory states that we are not mere recipients of the experiences we have when socializing with these people in the micro system environment, but we are contributing to the construction of such environment.

2. The Mesosystem

The mesosystem involves the relationships between the microsystems in one's life. This means that your family experience may be related to your school experience. For example, if a child is neglected by his parents, he may have a low chance of developing positive attitude towards his teachers. Also, this child may feel awkward in the presence of peers and may resort to withdrawal from a group of classmates.

3. The Exosystem

The exosystem is the setting in which there is a link between the context where the person does not have any active role, and the context where the person is actively participating. Suppose a child is more attached to his father than his mother. If the father goes abroad to work for several months, there may be a conflict between the mother and the child's social relationship, or on the other hand, this event may result to a tighter bond between the mother and the child.

4. The Macrosystem

The macrosystem setting is the actual culture of an individual. The cultural contexts involve the socioeconomic status of the person and/or his family, his ethnicity or race and living in a still developing or a third world country. For example, being born to a poor family makes a person work harder every day.

5. The Chronosystem

The chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan. This may also involve the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person. One classic example of this is how divorce, as a major life transition, may affect not only the couple's relationship but also their children's behaviour. According to a majority of research, children are negatively affected on the first year after the divorce. The next years after it would reveal that the interaction within the family becomes more stable and agreeable (<https://explorable.com/ecological-systems-theory>)

The development of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was mainly influenced by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian teacher and psychologist who created the social learning theory of development in the 1920s and 1930s. Bronfenbrenner developed his original theory during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Recognising that the individual was being overlooked in other theories of human development, and influenced by Kurt Lewin's modern social psychology and his colleague, Stephen J. Ceci, Bronfenbrenner published his new theory and named it the Bioecological Systems Theory in 1986.